

# PREFACE

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The publication of this Guidebook marks the end of a seven year “Way Ahead” process. The purpose of this process has been to discern God’s will for the future of PWA and YWG.

God promises that He will direct the paths of those who trust in Him and do not lean on their own understanding. On many occasions over the past seven years there has been a real sense of His prompting and guiding. Times of prayer have been followed by unified fresh thinking about important decisions. Step by step the way ahead has become clearer to both the PWA Executive Committee and the YWG Central Committee. Now, with expectation, *Presbyterian Women* (PW) is ready to be launched.

The PW Central Committee will replace the PWA Executive Committee and the YWG Central Committee from May 2008. Both organisations are coming together, sharing the same Mission Statement and Aims. PW Groups are envisaged as women’s fellowships in which women are encouraged to become Christians and to become Christ-like. In addition to supporting mission at home and overseas, each PW Group is to seek ways of actively reaching women in its own area for Christ.

Many women can thank God for the influence PWA and YWG has had on their lives, but now a new chapter begins in the story of women’s work within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. There is a sense of anticipation - how will God use PW to further the work already done by PWA and YWG? How will women reach other women for Christ? How will local churches use the launch of PW to influence women for the Saviour? Opportunity knocks and the Bible encourages Christians to make the most of every opportunity.

This is a time to give thanks for the past and it is also a time to look forward to the future. Above all, it is a time to pray: a time to pray that Almighty God will take PW and use it as a tool in His hands; a time to pray that through the work and witness of PW, women will become disciples of Christ; and a time to pray that women will come together for the glory of God.

This Guidebook has been written to help women make the most of the God-given opportunities which lie ahead. It contains details of how PW will be structured and practical advice on how to run a PW Group or PW LINK. It also contains guidance on how to amalgamate a PWA branch with a YWG. It is recommended reading for every woman involved in PW!

April 2008

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# *Presbyterian Women* AN INTRODUCTION

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## **Name of organisation at central level:**

*Presbyterian Women* (PW)

## **Name of organisation at congregational level:**

PW Group

## **Motto of organisation:**

Living for Jesus

## **Mission Statement and Aims of organisation:**

*Presbyterian Women* encourages women to become disciples of Christ.

*Presbyterian Women* aims to highlight the need for:

1. Love and unity
2. Obedience to God
3. Christian living and spiritual maturity
4. Service using gifts, time and money
5. Local and global mission

## **Logo of organisation:**



*Presbyterian Women* is to be a Christ centred organisation. In the logo the circle around the cross represents women whose lives are centred on the Lord Jesus Christ.

# CONSTITUTION

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## 1. Name

The name of the organisation shall be *Presbyterian Women*, incorporating the former *Presbyterian Women's Association* and the former *Young Women's Groups*, and hereinafter referred to as PW.

## 2. Motto

The motto of PW shall be: Living for Jesus

## 3. Mission Statement and Aims

*Presbyterian Women* encourages women to become disciples of Christ. *Presbyterian Women* aims to highlight the need for:

- i Love and unity
- ii Obedience to God
- iii Christian living and spiritual maturity
- iv Service using gifts, time and money
- v Local and global mission

## 4. PW Groups

Where possible a group shall be formed in each congregation, to bring together women at a congregational level, encourage them to become disciples of Christ and work to fulfil the aims of PW. Each group shall operate under the authority of the Kirk Session. Stated meetings shall be held and membership shall be open to all women who accept the aims of PW.

## 5. PW LINK (Living, Inspiring and Nurturing for the Kingdom)

There shall be in each Presbytery a PW Committee known as the PW LINK, to bring together members of PW.

Constituent members:

Three members from each PW Group, at least one of whom should be an Office Bearer. Each member to serve for three years, unless:

- (i) elected to serve on the PW Central Committee, the PW Forum or the PW LINK Planning Committee; or
- (ii) appointed to represent PW at the General Assembly, Boards or Presbytery.

In these circumstances membership of the PW LINK should be extended until the additional responsibilities end.

# CONSTITUTION

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## 6. PW Forum

There shall be a PW Forum to bring together PW LINK representatives at a central level. The PW Forum shall be made up of:

- (a) members of the PW Central Committee and its Subcommittees
- (b) five representatives from each PW LINK:
  - i. the three serving PW LINK Office Bearers i.e. Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer; and
  - ii. two others from each PW LINK, appointed to attend for three years.

The following may also be invited to attend: four members of the Deaconess Association; missionaries on home assignment; and others, as appropriate.

## 7. PW Central Committee

There shall be a Central Committee of PW which shall be the decision making body of the organisation.

Constituent members:

- (a) one representative elected from each PW LINK for a period of seven years
- (b) the President, the Home Vice-President, the Overseas Vice-President and the General Secretary of PW.

The Editor of *Wider World* and the wife of the Moderator shall be invited to sit and deliberate. In exceptional circumstances the PW Central Committee reserves the right to co-opt additional members to meet specific needs for a period of one to two years.

## 8. Finance

The financial year of PW shall end on 31<sup>st</sup> December. A statement of income and expenditure shall be submitted to the PW Annual Meeting. A report and statement of Annual Accounts shall be submitted to the PW Central Committee, the General Assembly and, if appropriate, the relevant Boards. Each PW Group will receive a copy of an Annual Report including a Financial Supplement.

# CHANGES AT A GLANCE

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## OLD

Presbyterian Women's Association  
Young Women's Groups



## NEW

*Presbyterian Women*



PWA Executive Committee  
YWG Central Committee

**PW Central Committee**

PWA Central President  
YWG Chairman

**President**

General Committee

**PW Forum**

Presbyterial Committee

**PW LINK**

PWA Branch  
YWG

**PW Group**

PWA Branch President  
YWG President

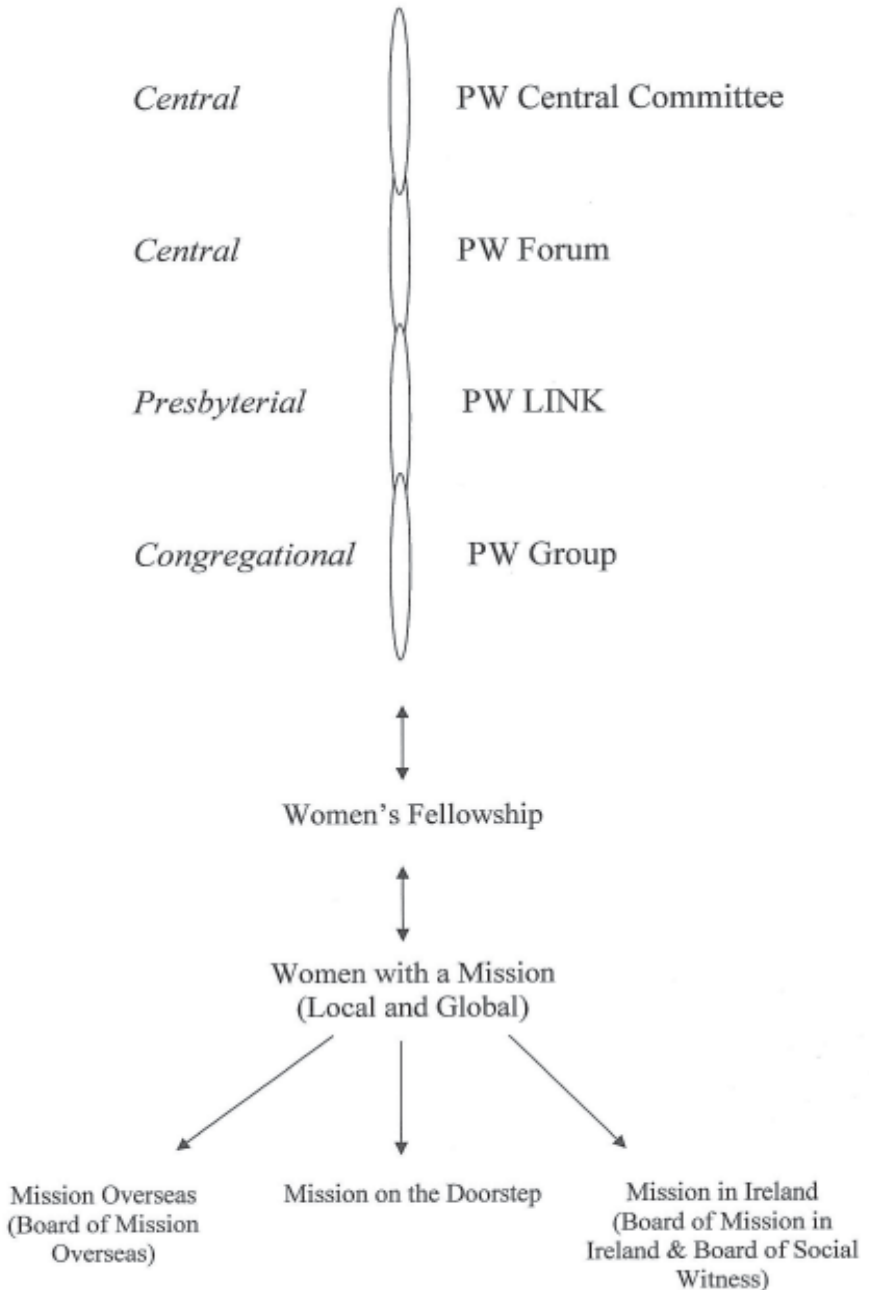
**Leader**

PWA Branch Vice-President  
YWG Vice-President

**Deputy Leader**

# *Presbyterian Women* AN OVERVIEW

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## A. Role of PW Central Committee

This is the decision-making body of *Presbyterian Women*.

1. It will be concerned with the **spiritual life** of the organisation as it:
  - decides the theme and direction of PW
  - encourages prayer
  - promotes women's ministry / fellowship
  - educates regarding mission at home and overseas
  - organises the Annual Meeting, conferences etc.
  - produces resources
  - provides guidance for PW LINK and PW Group meetings
2. It will be concerned with **finance** as it:
  - educates about the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas
  - allocates grants
  - decides Birthday Projects
  - formulates financial policies for speakers' fees etc.
3. It will be responsible for **policy making**:
  - reviewing existing policies
  - keeping an accurate Guidebook
4. It will **provide representation** on:
  - Board of Mission in Ireland
  - Board of Mission Overseas
  - Board of Social Witness
  - other external women's groups, as appropriate
5. It will work in **partnership** with the **Board of Social Witness** in relation to South Belfast Friendship House and will provide members to serve on its Management Committee.
6. It will work in **partnership** with the **Board of Mission in Ireland** and the **Board of Mission Overseas** in relation to deaconesses and missionaries.
7. It will oversee the **production of the *Wider World*** magazine by:
  - appointing an editor
  - appointing an editorial committee

8. It will determine the necessary **staffing and office requirements** of the organisation.

## **B. Constituent Members and Length of Service**

### **Voting members**

One representative elected from each PW LINK for a period of seven years

The President, the Home Vice-President, the Overseas Vice-President and the General Secretary of PW

### **Non-voting, ex-officio members**

Moderator's wife

Wider World Editor

### ***Important Notes:-***

1. In exceptional circumstances, PW Central Committee reserves the right to co-opt additional members to meet specific needs for a period of one to two years.
2. In the event of Presbyteries combining, the representatives from the combining Presbyteries serve out their seven year term. A new representative can then be elected from the newly formed Presbytery.
3. In the event of a PW LINK representative being elected as an Office Bearer, an additional representative from their PW LINK should be elected and serve for the duration of their term in office.
4. If a member moves Presbytery or is unable to complete her term of service, the PW LINK shall appoint another representative.
5. Members of PW Central Committee shall not normally be eligible for reappointment for three years. The one exception to this occurs when an additional PW LINK representative is appointed on account of the existing PW LINK representative becoming an Office Bearer (see *Important Note 3* above). In this special circumstance the outgoing additional PW LINK representative shall be eligible for reappointment after one year.

## **C. Office Bearers**

The Office Bearers shall meet, as necessary, with the General Secretary to plan meetings of PW Central Committee and oversee the workings of the organisation.

PW Central Committee shall elect the following Office Bearers:

A **President**, appointed for one year to:

- keep up to date with all aspects of PW and liaise with the PW General Secretary
- represent PW, as appropriate
- chair the Annual Meeting, PW Forum and other PW meetings, as required
- go on an overseas trip on behalf of PW, if required
- undertake deputation which should be booked through the PW Office

A **Home Vice-President**, appointed for two years to:

- keep up to date with all aspects of the Mission at Home which involves PW and update the PW Central Committee at each of its meetings about the work of the deaconesses by giving a Home Report
- liaise with the PW General Secretary
- represent PW, as appropriate
- chair alternate meetings of the PW Central Committee
- contribute to the management of South Belfast Friendship House
- undertake deputation which should be booked through the PW Office
- deputise for the President when necessary

An **Overseas Vice-President**, appointed for two years to:

- keep up to date with all aspects of the work of the Board of Mission Overseas
- update the PW Central Committee at each of its meetings by giving an Overseas Report
- liaise with the PW General Secretary
- represent PW, as appropriate
- chair alternate meetings of the PW Central Committee
- undertake deputation which should be booked through the PW Office
- deputise for the President when necessary

***Important Notes:-***

1. In the event of the conclusion of an Office Bearer's term of office coinciding with the end of their seven years on the PW Central Committee they shall continue to serve on the PW Central Committee for one further year.

2. If a Vice-President is elected to serve as President during her term of office then another member of the PW Central Committee must be elected to be Vice-President.

### D. Frequency of Meetings

A minimum of six times per year.

### E. Subcommittees

PW Central Committee shall have the following Subcommittees:-

1. A **Finance** Subcommittee to:
  - provide the PW Central Committee with:
    - i accurate information about the finance of the organisation
    - ii the PW Annual Accounts for consideration and approval
    - iii proposals regarding grants to the relevant Boards
  - prepare budgets, taking into account both the present income and expenditure and the forecasted income and expenditure.
2. An **Arrangements** Subcommittee to take responsibility for making the arrangements for the Annual Meeting, the PW Forum, PW Conferences and other events. Arrangements to include planning the programme for each event and recommending appropriate speakers.
3. A **Resources** Subcommittee to take responsibility for the preparation of new programme material for the organisation and the development of other resource materials to further the work of PW.
4. A **Wider World Editorial** Subcommittee to:
  - support and encourage the Editor
  - provide feedback and accountability
  - contribute ideas and suggestions for inclusion in the magazine
  - formulate policies in regard to the magazine

Other Subcommittees may be set up on an ad-hoc basis, as required. Central Office Bearers to stipulate the make-up of each Subcommittee. PW members, not on PW Central Committee but with relevant expertise, may be invited to become members of any one of the Subcommittees. Members of the PW Central Committee will be appointed as conveners of the Finance, Arrangements and Resources Subcommittees. The *Wider World* Editorial Subcommittee will normally be chaired by the serving PW President.

## F. Rules and Stipulations

1. In cases of emergency a committee, consisting of the President, Vice-Presidents and General Secretary shall have the power to act. Decisions taken must be ratified by a subsequent regular meeting of the PW Central Committee.
2. Non-attendance at the committee for one year, except in exceptional circumstances, shall disqualify for membership of the committee and the subsequent vacancy shall be filled.
3. A special meeting of the PW Central Committee may be called by the PW General Secretary and President after consultation with the other Office Bearers, or on the decision of a full meeting of the PW Central Committee, or at the written request of five PW Central Committee members.
4. Voting members of PW Central Committee shall be appointed to represent PW on the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Board of Mission Overseas and the Board of Social Witness (refer to section H for details of representation).
5. The General Secretary shall be responsible for the administration of the organisation.
6. The Annual Report shall be prepared by the General Secretary and shall be presented to the Annual Meeting and the General Assembly.
7. Arrangements for all meetings to be addressed by Deaconesses or members of PW Central Committee shall be made through the PW Office. (Missionary deputation is arranged through the BMO office.)
8. The Editor of *Wider World* shall undertake responsibility for the publication of the magazine.
9. Accounts including the *Wider World* account, shall be kept and shall be examined by the General Assembly's auditors and published in PW's Annual Report.

**G. Standing Orders for Meetings**

1. A quorum shall consist of nine members, one of whom shall act as Chairperson.
2. Agenda. The Agenda shall normally be sent out not less than seven days prior to the meeting and shall, as far as possible, list all business to be considered at the meeting. The Chairperson of the meeting should be informed before the commencement of the meeting of any other business to be considered.
3. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.
4. Minutes. (1) The minutes shall normally be presented at the next stated meeting and, when confirmed, signed by the Chairperson. (2) Particular care is to be taken when recording sensitive matters in the minutes. Confidential information disclosed and details of discussions which take place at meetings are to be considered private. Members are required to treat them as such.
5. Rescinding of resolutions or decisions. Once the minutes have been confirmed and signed, any notice of motion to rescind or alter an existing resolution or decision must be given in writing in time to appear on the printed Agenda for the next meeting, or be given verbally at a meeting to be tabled on the Agenda of the subsequent meeting. No alterations or rescissions may otherwise be made.
6. Rules for speaking. Every speaker shall address the Chairperson.
7. Ruling of the Chairperson. The ruling of the Chairperson shall be final. In the case of equality of votes the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
8. Amendments. (1) All amendments to a written resolution shall be submitted to the Chairperson in writing, signed by the proposer and seconder, and shall be read to the meeting. (2) All amendments to a verbal resolution may be made verbally and, when seconded, shall be dealt with in accordance with the standing orders and rules in force at the time.
9. Order of amendments. When an amendment has been moved and seconded, no subsequent amendments shall be moved, until the first amendment shall have been disposed of. When an amendment has been carried, the motion amended must be put to the meeting as the substantive resolution (in place of the original motion). A further amendment will then be in order.
10. Withdrawal of resolutions or amendments. A resolution or an amendment may be withdrawn with the consent of the proposer and seconder and the permission of the meeting.

## **H. Representation on Assembly Boards and Committees**

### **Background**

In order to be more effective at fulfilling Christ's Great Commission, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has established four Mission Boards. The mission work spearheaded by these Boards merits support from every church member. However, it is widely recognised that the women of the Church have long displayed a special interest in supporting missionary endeavour. This interest has been encouraged by the women's organisations which have existed within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. In recognition of the integral role PW continues to have in this regard there are PW representatives on the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Board of Mission Overseas and the Board of Social Witness.

### **PW Central Committee Representatives on Assembly Boards and Committees:-**

1. Board of Mission in Ireland:  
The Board - President, Home Vice-President, General Secretary and five other PW Central Committee members.  
Representatives from those listed above to sit on appropriate Board Committees.
2. Board of Mission Overseas:  
The Board - President, Overseas Vice-President, General Secretary and five other PW Central Committee members.  
Representatives from those listed above to sit on appropriate Board Committees.
3. Board of Social Witness:  
The Board - President, Home Vice-President, General Secretary and five other PW Central Committee members.  
Representatives from those listed above to sit on appropriate Board Committees.

## A. Role of PW Forum

1. To bring together PW LINK representatives at a central level.
2. To provide a forum which allows the work of *Presbyterian Women* to be considered in an atmosphere of worship.
3. To be an educational and a motivational body which equips, enthuses and empowers women to serve Christ.
4. To act as a link between the PW Central Committee and those who attend PW LINK meetings allowing:-
  - information to be passed on
  - introduction of new themes and circulation of resources
  - feedback about *Presbyterian Women* from different places
5. To support those planning and conducting PW LINK meetings and share ideas for PW LINK events.
6. To facilitate discussion about the work of *Presbyterian Women*.
7. To exchange news and views on topics relevant to the work of *Presbyterian Women*.

## B. Make-up of PW Forum

PW Forum shall be made up of:

- (a) Members of the PW Central Committee and its Subcommittees.
- (b) Five representatives from each PW LINK:
  - i. the three serving PW LINK Office Bearers, i.e. the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer; and
  - ii. two others from each PW LINK, appointed to attend for three years.  
If any one of these representatives is unable to attend the PW Forum, her PW LINK should send another representative in her place.

The following may also be invited to attend: four members of the Deaconess Association; missionaries on home assignment; and others, as appropriate.

## C. Office Bearers of PW Forum

PW Forum shall be chaired by the PW Central Committee's Office Bearers.

## D. Planning of PW Forum

This shall be undertaken by the PW Central Committee.

## E. Meetings of PW Forum

PW Forum shall normally meet twice a year - usually in September and February.

- The September Forum provides an ideal opportunity to enthuse members at the beginning of a new PW session.
- The February Forum provides an ideal opportunity to give advance notice of the following year's theme and publicise new resources for PW Groups.

### ***Important Note:***

The PW Central Committee reserves the right, on occasion, to substitute PW Forum with a larger conference specifically designed for PW Group members. In this instance, representatives from every PW Group will be invited to attend, in addition to or instead of, PW LINK representatives.

## LINK – Living ... Inspiring ... Nurturing ... for the Kingdom

### A. Role of PW LINK

1. To bring together members of *Presbyterian Women* at a Presbytery level.
2. To be a source of encouragement which will equip, enthuse and empower women to serve Christ.
3. To act as a link between the PW Central Committee and groups in churches, allowing information to be disseminated and reports to be circulated.
4. To discuss ways in which the work of *Presbyterian Women* can be strengthened at group level.
5. To be a body that organises LINK events at Presbytery level.
6. To elect a representative to serve on the PW Central Committee.
7. To appoint representatives to attend PW Forum (please consult the PW Forum section of this Guidebook for the exact details of the required representation).
8. To nominate, if required by Presbytery, representatives who will attend the General Assembly, Board meetings and Presbytery meetings.
9. To submit an Annual Report on the work of *Presbyterian Women* to a stated meeting of Presbytery.

### B. Constituent Members and Length of Service

Constituent members:

Three members from each PW Group, at least one of whom should be an Office Bearer. Each member to serve for three years, unless:

- i. elected to serve on the PW Central Committee, the PW Forum or the PW LINK Planning Committee; or
- ii. appointed to represent PW at the General Assembly, Boards or Presbytery.

In these circumstances, membership of the PW LINK should be extended until the additional responsibilities end.

**Please Note:** If the PW Central Committee representative is elected to serve as an Office Bearer of the PW Central Committee, another LINK representative is elected to serve in her place on the PW Central Committee and on the LINK Committee for the duration of her term of office. When this situation occurs both the PW Central Committee Office Bearer and her replacement PW Central Committee representative will be entitled to be members of the LINK.

### C. PW LINK Planning Committee

Each LINK shall elect a Planning Committee consisting of:

**The LINK Chairperson**, appointed for three years to:

- set the tone at LINK meetings
- encourage enthusiasm for the work of PW
- oversee the running of LINK meetings and events
- chair LINK and LINK Planning Committee meetings

**The LINK Secretary**, appointed for not more than five years to:

- book speakers for LINK events and meetings
- notify LINK Planning Committee and LINK members of the dates, times and venues of LINK Planning Committee and LINK meetings
- keep minutes of business of LINK Planning Committee and LINK meetings
- pass on information and distribute Resource Packs
- produce a report on PW for presentation at a meeting of Presbytery

**The LINK Treasurer**, appointed for not more than five years to:

- be responsible for LINK finances and bank account
- collect a set fee from each group to cover the expenses of LINK meetings/events
- receive payment from each group for the Resource Packs
- keep accurate financial records
- prepare an Annual Financial Statement for presentation at a LINK meeting
- pay all expenses relating to LINK meetings, including the payment of travelling expenses to visiting speakers

**The PW Central Committee representative**, appointed for seven years to:

- represent the LINK on the PW Central Committee
- update LINK meetings on PW Central Committee decisions
- support PW Groups in their Presbytery

**Two additional LINK members** – appointed for three years

None of these shall be available for immediate re-election. Ideally, the appointment of Office Bearers should be staggered to avoid all three positions becoming vacant in the one year. Once elected, the PW Central Committee representative shall be eligible to be a voting member of the PW Central Committee as soon as the outgoing member ceases to serve.

## **D. Frequency and Timing of PW LINK Meetings**

To meet twice a year at a time most suitable for members – ideally after the Board meetings.

## **E. Planning of PW LINK Meetings**

Planning is essential. To do this the LINK Planning Committee should meet in advance of each LINK meeting. Planning should allow suggestions from the PW Forum to be incorporated into the subsequent LINK meeting.

## **F. Guidance for PW LINK Meetings**

It is recommended that at least fifteen minutes of the programme should be given to enthusing, encouraging, equipping and empowering the membership.

Sample Agenda for a LINK meeting:

- Refreshments/welcome on arrival, allowing those attending to get to know each other
- Icebreaker (optional)
- Introductions and formal welcome - those taking part should introduce themselves at every meeting
- Opening devotions
- Minutes - ideally these should be sent out in written form with the notification of the meeting. They can then be agreed without being formally read aloud at the meeting.
- Business
- Information/short reports
- Announcements
- Motivational slot:
  - Invite speakers to:
    - inform about the wider work of PW and PCI
    - address the spiritual and social needs of women today
    - help those attending develop new communication skills
  - Use small groups to:
    - share good ideas
    - engage in prayer
  - Use items from the Resource Pack to encourage others to use it
  - Give ideas on how to present information in a variety of ways
- Closing

## G. Suggestions for PW LINK Events

Each LINK needs to develop and adapt the events it organises in response to the needs of the local PW Groups. One type of event may run successfully on a number of occasions and then benefit from a change. Consider both the format and the content of events and pray that they will be a source of encouragement which will equip, enthuse and empower women to serve Christ.

At LINK events speakers may be asked to:

- highlight the theme, explain a Bible passage
- speak on any aspect of the work and witness of missionaries, deaconesses or PW
- share a testimony
- speak on a topic from a Biblical perspective (e.g. stress, carrying burdens, using our gifts, women helping women, hospitality etc.)

Events should be well publicised in all the different groups beforehand. If the event involves the provision of food, places may need to be booked in advance to facilitate catering arrangements.

Outlined below are a number of possible formats. The suggestions for possible content are far from exhaustive. Not all are intended for use in any one event. Select from the given ideas, ‘mix and match’ and adapt to suit!

### **Ladies Breakfast / All Age Girls’ Breakfast**

Timescale: 9.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.

Venue: Local hotel/restaurant or, for the adventurous, a Church Hall!

Content: Welcome on arrival. Breakfast. Icebreaker to help women to get to know one another. Speaker.

### **Coffee Morning**

Time scale: 10.30 a.m. – 12.00 noon

Venue: Church Hall large enough to accommodate the anticipated number of women when seated around tables.

Content: Welcome on arrival, serve tea/coffee and scones at tables – allowing time for women to get to know one another informally. Missionary/deaconess spot or interview. Speaker.

Short discussion time, developing the speaker's theme followed by feedback session. (Use prepared questions as basis for discussion time.)

### **Morning Conference**

Timescale: 10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Venue: Church Hall.

Content: Welcome on arrival. Praise and worship.  
Short opening devotional to set the tone.  
Morning tea/coffee - informally milling around to allow mixing.  
Further praise and worship. Poem, drama or interview. Speaker.  
Discussion groups related to the conference theme.

### **Day Conference / Friendship Day**

Timescale: 10.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Venue: Church Hall or Hotel.

Content: Welcome on arrival, tea/coffee and scones.  
Praise and worship. Speaker. Interview. Soup lunch. Further praise and worship.  
Afternoon seminars on relevant topics, for example:

- 'Media Watch' - the influence of TV
- 'Personal Evangelism' – how to witness
- 'Dealing with Disappointment' – coping with trials
- 'How to be a good wife!' etc.

Panel using main speaker and seminar speakers:

- allow panel to introduce themselves
- ask about women of faith who have influenced them
- ask about their Christian walk – what have they found helpful? etc.

Speaker to close.

### **Workshop**

Timescale: 1-2 hours - could be run in the morning, the afternoon or the evening, depending on area.

Venue: Church Hall.

Content: Welcome and worship. Invite a speaker with special interest/expertise in area being considered. Use discussion groups and role play to address:

- how to lead a PW meeting, tips for speaking in public
- how to be an Office Bearer in PW
- how to plan a PW programme

- how to recruit new members
  - how to inform about missionaries and deaconesses
- Could include a 'Helpful Tips' section on any aspect of PW - an ideal format in which to introduce new worship songs and demonstrate different ideas for opening worship in PW Groups.

### **Service / Evening Meeting**

Timescale: 7.30 p.m./8.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m./9.30 p.m.

Venue: Church building or Church Hall.

Content: More formal type of event. Welcome and worship. Special praise – have a choir, a group or a soloist. Alternatively have an extended praise time involving everyone. Could also include a short sketch, a poem, a missionary/deaconess spot, an interview or short testimony. Speaker. Supper – cup of tea and a traybake/biscuit.

When planning all the above events be aware of time constraints. Allow adequate time for room changes and eating. A provisional timetable for the event should be drawn up with every participant made aware of the exact length of time they have been allocated.

## A. Role of the PW Group

1. To **bring together women at a congregational level.**
2. To **encourage women to become disciples of Christ.** *The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost (Luke 19:10).* Every woman's greatest need is to be found by Jesus Christ and enter into a personal and saving relationship with Him. Groups should point women to Christ for salvation so that, when He comes or calls, they may be found to be disciples who are **living for Jesus.**
3. To highlight the need for –
  - (a) **Love and unity.** *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbour as yourself (Luke 10:27).* Groups should encourage women in their love for the Lord and for others. Warm fellowship, practical care and compassion are attractive expressions of Christian love. These can be fostered within a group as women are given informal opportunities to get to know one another and as they *rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.*
  - (b) **Obedience to God.** *If you love me, you will obey what I command ... (John 14:15).* The Word of God must have a central place in each group. As it is publicly read and explained it should be allowed to shape the group and individual lives.
  - (c) **Christian living and spiritual maturity.** *Let us ... go on to maturity ... (Hebrews 6:1).* The teaching within the programme and the godly example of believers in the group should combine to nurture spiritual growth.
  - (d) **Service using gifts, time and money.** *Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord ... (1 Corinthians 15:58).* Each group provides an opportunity for women to serve God through leadership and practical tasks. Groups also allow women to contribute to the work of missionaries, deaconesses and *Presbyterian Women* by giving to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas. In addition, various PW projects can be financially supported.
  - (e) **Local and global mission.** *Go and make disciples of all nations ... (Matthew 28:19).* Groups need 'mission

vision' for their local area, the island of Ireland and beyond. Locally, the group can arrange special events for women and actively support evangelistic programmes such as 'Fit for Life' and 'Mother and Toddler' groups. Each group should share information about deaconesses who are serving God in Ireland, praying that God will use their ministries for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. Groups also have both the responsibility and privilege of practically and prayerfully supporting the work of missionaries who are serving God in other countries, particularly those who are serving with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

In accordance with Paragraph 38(a) of The Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the group shall operate under the authority of the Kirk Session.

## B. Constituent Members

Women are welcome to attend one or all of a PW Group's meetings and events without paying the membership fee. However, payment of the membership fee denotes formal membership, resulting in eligibility to stand and vote in committee elections.

## C. PW Group Committee

PW members shall elect a committee which shall be responsible for the general oversight of their group.

Committee members should be committed to Christ and in agreement with the Mission Statement and Aims of *Presbyterian Women*. They should also be members of the congregation.

### C1. Duties of Committee

The committee shall:

- Prayerfully **seek God's guidance** for their group.
- **Promote** *Presbyterian Women*.
- Meet to **plan the programme** and consider how best to invite new members, lead opening devotions, share information with members, welcome members to meetings, serve supper, arrange the group's finances etc. In addition,

- consider hosting additional **special events/meetings** to encourage women to become disciples of Christ.
- Meet prior to group meetings/events in order to **pray for what is planned.**
  - Share the responsibility of making sure the **room is prepared** and that all the **arrangements work smoothly.**
  - Recognise and **encourage the use of the gifts and talents** within the group.
  - Make a special effort to **befriend women who come on their own.**
  - Appoint three group **representatives to the local PW LINK**, at least one of these representatives should be an Office Bearer.
  - Oversee the appointment of a **Wider World agent** to promote the magazine at congregational level.
  - Consider **fund-raising** ventures (for guidance see the Finance section of this Guidebook).
  - **Organise committee elections** to take place in a manner and at a frequency most suited to their group. They shall also decide how long each Office Bearer shall serve.

## **C2. Size of Committee**

Recognising the wide and varied make-up of groups, the following figures are presented for guidance purposes only:-

groups with 10-30 members	6 -8 member committee
groups with 30-60 members	8 -10 member committee
groups with 60-100 members	10 -12 member committee

**Important Note:** The suggested figures for the size of the committee are inclusive of the Office Bearers.

## **C3. Committee Elections**

It is strongly recommended that committee elections are held no less frequently than every three years. Balancing the need for both fresh thinking and experience, it may be beneficial to keep a certain number of the experienced committee members in place whilst electing new faces to join them. Here are two examples of how this may work in practice:-

*Example 1:* Group A has a ten member committee. It decides to replace half of its committee at two-yearly elections. After the original committee has served for two years the membership is told the names of the five women leaving the committee – they are ineligible for immediate re-election. Five new women are elected in their place. For the next two years this new committee, with an equal mix of experienced and new hands, oversees the group. An election is then held, at which the women who have now served a total of four years stand down and are unavailable for re-election. The women with two years' experience now provide continuity as they are joined by new faces. The two-year cycle recommences.

*Example 2:* Group B has a six member committee. It decides to keep two of its committee at every election. It decides to hold an election every three years. After the original committee has served for three years the membership is told the names of the four members leaving the committee. They are unavailable for re-election. Four new committee members are then elected to join the two original members and this new committee serves for three years until the election process is repeated.

## **D. PW Group Office Bearers**

PW members shall elect four of their committee members to serve as Office Bearers within the group. There shall be a Leader, a Deputy Leader, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Ideally, each one should serve for a prescribed period e.g. two to three years.

### **D1. Duties of Leader**

The Leader must be a good communicator who is not easily discouraged. She should be enthusiastic about PW and its place within her congregation and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Leader should not carry all the responsibility or feel the need to do everything. Her role is to set the tone for the group and share responsibility of leadership with the other Office Bearers and committee members. In addition, the Leader shall:

- Work towards the creation of a warm and welcoming group, with opportunities for women to get to know one another.
- Personally encourage members and take an active interest in their lives.

- Lead the group to rejoice with those who have special events to celebrate (e.g. birth of a baby, marriage, special birthday etc.) and weep with those who face trouble (e.g. ill health, bereavement etc.)
- Be responsible for opening and closing of meetings - involving others is to be encouraged.
- Chair committee meetings.
- Liaise closely with the Secretary and Treasurer about all matters relating to the group.
- Co-sign all written records with the Secretary to confirm they are a true and accurate record.

**D2. Duties of Deputy Leader**

- Stand in for Leader, if required.
- Prayerfully and practically support the Leader in preparing for meetings.
- Share responsibility of opening and closing meetings, if desired.

**D3. Duties of Secretary**

- Receive all correspondence and take responsibility for passing on information to the Leader and group members.
- Keep minutes of business meetings. A short and concise written record of business decisions is essential.
- Complete programme cards so they are ready at the beginning of the year, e.g. photocopy the programme and stick it inside the cards.
- Keep a copy of the annual programme as a record of the group's activities. If desired, a short report of each meeting may be written for record purposes only. The formal reading of reports is not necessary.
- Take responsibility for booking speakers. This should be done well in advance with the following details given to the speaker:
  - the subject to be addressed.
  - the time allocated for the talk.
  - a contact name and telephone number in case of an emergency.
  - clear directions to where your group meets.
  - the size and nature of the group.

(If requesting to book PCI personnel please complete the official booking forms. The form to book deaconesses is available from PW Office. The form to book missionaries is available from BMO Office.) The Secretary should confirm the original booking in writing and then contact the speaker again two to three weeks before the meeting to review all the earlier arrangements and check if the speaker has any special requirements for the meeting.

- Complete all forms sent out from the PW Office within the specified time.
- Organise publicity by giving the minister pulpit announcements relating to PW. Also have announcements ready in time for inclusion in printed church announcement sheets.
- In consultation with the Leader arrange dates, venues and times for committee meetings. Give adequate notice to committee members.
- Send congratulations/sympathy/get well cards to members, as appropriate.
- Prepare Annual Report for Congregational Annual General Meeting, if necessary.

#### **D4. Duties of Treasurer**

- Receive all money and keep relevant records.
- Prepare Annual Financial Statement for presentation at an appropriate group meeting and inclusion in the congregation's Financial Report.
- Pay all expenses relating to the group on the committee's instructions.
- Be responsible for the payment of realistic travelling expenses/thank you gifts to visiting speakers.
- Be responsible for the group's bank account.
- Update the group on the main funds of PW (see Finance section of this Guidebook).
- Make mission boxes available to women within the group and congregation.
- Be responsible for sending contributions to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas and membership fees to the Financial Secretary, Church House. Make cheques payable to "The Presbyterian Church in Ireland" and state clearly which PW fund they are intended for. The financial year

ends on 31st December and contributions must be received at Church House by this date to be included in the current year's accounts. Contributions received after 31st December will be included in the accounts for the following year.

- Be responsible for sending contributions to the Birthday Project to the Financial Secretary, Church House by 30th April each year. Make cheques payable to "The Presbyterian Church in Ireland" and state clearly that it is intended for the PW Birthday Project.
- Liaise with congregational Gift Aid Secretary to assess possibility of members who pay income tax having their PW contributions included in the Gift Aid scheme. This can enhance the amount given at no extra cost to the members. Non tax paying spouses of tax payers can also be eligible for Gift Aid on their donations. Again, the Treasurer should liaise with the congregational Gift Aid Secretary for details. Meticulous financial records must be maintained if participating in the Gift Aid scheme.

***Please Note:-***

The primary financial responsibility of each group is to support the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas. All money in mission boxes must be given to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas. It is recommended that the offering from any PW service or fundraiser should also be given to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas. When allocating funds, the majority of any unspecified donations received by a group should also go to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas. Treasurers are to be aware that groups may, if they wish, raise funds for congregational objects or other projects, provided they state clearly to their members in advance the object for which the money is to be raised.

**E. Frequency of PW Group Meetings**

Each group should meet once or twice a month. Special events can be arranged in addition to these meetings.

## F. Planning the Programme

View every year as a fresh opportunity to be led by God to a new programme, remembering that, *if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got.*

### F1. Keys to Programme Planning

Prior planning prevents poor performance so:

- Call a meeting to plan your programme. It may take more than one!
- In advance of the meeting prepare a list of the dates of meetings, PW service etc.
- Circulate the Resource Pack, allowing all committee members to prayerfully read through it before the meeting.

### F2. Programme Planning Meeting

- Review the past year. Allow committee members to share which meetings they found most helpful. This may indicate the type of meeting which will be most effective and is worth repeating.
- Remind members of the Mission Statement and Aims of PW and the theme for the year.
- Pray that God will be the unseen programme planner as He guides the committee's thinking.

### F3. The Aim of the Programme

Programmes should:

- Encourage PW members to become disciples of Christ.
- Highlight the need for:
  - a. Love and unity
  - b. Obedience to God
  - c. Christian living and spiritual maturity
  - d. Service using gifts, time and money
  - e. Local and global mission

### F4. Suggestions for Suitable Programmes

**Members of the group taking their own meeting.** Find suggestions for programmes and ideas on the year's theme in the Resource Pack. These are 'ready-made' for groups to use.

**Speakers coming to the meeting** – for example:

- Missionaries and deaconesses coming to tell about their work.
- Relatives of missionaries are often able to speak with insight about missionary work.
- Volunteers who have been on short-term overseas visits, youth teams or church exchanges.
- Speakers from the Boards and agencies of the church.
- Christian professionals with a special interest in topical issues e.g. health matters, parenting etc.
- Christians who will share their testimony and tell how they have known God at work in their lives, perhaps in difficult circumstances.
- Speakers to highlight the theme.

**Interview Nights** – have a list of questions prepared for visitor to answer, perhaps ask members to contribute to these in advance. Use the interview to get to know the visitor and highlight their Christian faith. Can use ‘Desert Island Discs’ format.

**‘Twin Track’ Nights.** These combine the secular with the sacred. Try and give equal time to both aspects – for example:

- Have someone speak on home security and have an epilogue about eternal security.
- Have a beauty demonstration before someone speaks on how to be beautiful before God – *dressed in beauty not your own.*
- Have a talk on kitchen hygiene and then think about ‘heart hygiene’ - *Create in me a clean heart ...*
- Combine floral art with a devotional on God as our Creator.
- Have a jewellery display and then discover what the Bible says about jewellery or precious things.

**Panel Nights** - get along some experts and ask the questions, drawing out spiritual truths.

**Asking another group to take the meeting** – for example:

- Members of the Youth Fellowship could take a meeting sharing their favourite verses, experiences from a summer outreach team or a testimony. They may even be able to form a singing group!
- Members of another local PW Group could take a meeting e.g. someone could sing, someone could testify, someone lead a devotion, someone demonstrate a particular craft skill etc.

**DVD Night** - watch a DVD about some aspect of Christian work or testimony.

**Quiz Night** - table quizzes can help women to get to know each other. Include a round on missionaries for whom the group prays.

**Music Night** - have a Christian group come and sing.

This list is far from exhaustive but it may help start the thinking process! Completed programmes should be shown to the Minister and Kirk Session for their approval.

## G. Guidance for Running PW Group Meetings

*It's not just booking a good speaker!* It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that deciding the content of the programme is all that matters. However, how we open, conduct and close our PW meetings will either enhance or detract from our programmes. Sometimes small changes can have a huge impact. To run a warm and welcoming PW Group think about:-

### Publicity ...

- The best way to invite someone is to go in person and ask them. Make their attendance easier by offering to accompany them to the meetings.
- Use a pulpit announcement and the church announcement sheet.
- Printed invitations – highlighting the programme or key events for the year ahead. These should be given to all the women in the church.
- Local press for special events.
- Give programme cards to every newcomer so they are informed about the year's events.

### Setting the tone ...

- Have a few ladies to welcome everyone as they arrive – create a rota if necessary.
- Play background music – perhaps a worship CD.
- Have up to date display boards in your meeting area with recent photographs etc.
- Relaxed seating arrangements – create a friendly atmosphere in which everyone can see and hear.
- Use a PA system, if available – this will ensure all the members will hear during the meetings.

### **Content of Meetings ...**

- Opening worship should be an integral part of all meetings. This should include prayer, a Bible reading and praise. A short devotion can also be included.
- As part of the meeting, a missionary/deaconess/Social Witness slot encourages informed prayer. Refer to *Points for Prayer* for background information. *Prayerline* and *Prayer Focus* give updated prayer requests.
- Consider doing different activities from time to time e.g. poem/book review/drama ...

### **Business ...**

- Keep business short and at the most suitable part of the meeting – it can be done after supper to concentrate minds and not detract from the opening worship! Prior to group meetings, the committee should decide the details of trips, Christmas dinners, services, catering requirements etc. thus removing the need for lengthy discussions during the meeting. If the committee needs guidance or direction from group members a show of hands can quickly allow members to express their opinion.

### **Membership ...**

- Keep a special membership book for members to sign each year when they join the group. It can also be useful to keep a note of member's contact details. A roll book is not essential but absences should be noted and followed up so that members feel cared for.

### **Hospitality ...**

- Arrange supper to encourage the development of a warm, relaxed atmosphere.
- Each group can choose the type of supper they want to provide.
- Make sure mugs/cups are provided at each meeting.
- It may be useful to produce a supper rota for the year.

### **Money matters ...**

- PW members are asked to contribute to:
  - The Mission Fund for Home and Overseas
  - Birthday Projects
  - They are also asked for an annual membership fee.
- Money for all of the above is sent to the Financial Secretary in Church House and details of how it is used can be read in the Finance section of this Guidebook. In the local group, members may also be asked for 'supper money' or 'dues' to cover supper expenses and help pay for speakers.

- Think about how and when money is collected, always remembering that people are more important than pounds!
- To collect money on the first night can be off-putting to newcomers who may have come unprepared to join.
- Make a habit of explaining what each fund is used for every year so that new members are informed and understand the good reasons behind their giving.
- Use suitable containers, e.g. an attractive teapot to collect supper money, a piggy bank with a birthday card beside it for the Birthday Project. Present a fresh image.
- Display a mission box to remind members to keep giving to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas.

## H. Guidance for Planning One-off Events

*Unless there is an element of risk in our exploits for God, there is no need for faith (Hudson Taylor).* PW Groups can put faith into action and plan events which aim to encourage women to become disciples of Christ, for example:-

### H1. Bridge Building Events

Women welcoming women ... these are low-key friendship events such as morning coffee hours and soup lunches which close with short devotional messages (5 minutes). They provide opportunities to build bridges and form relationships with women who would not normally attend a PW meeting. They allow PW members to serve God by providing hospitality and prayerfully inviting friends who are not yet Christians. Christmas dinners, 'days away' and other social events may also be used as bridge building events.

### H2. Special 'One-off' Events

Once every one or two years, host a special event - a 'female friendly' presentation followed by an evangelistic epilogue or testimony. For publicity, consider placing posters in local shops and using specially produced printed invitations. Plan format of event carefully so that newcomers feel welcome and at ease. Carefully choose the speaker so that the Gospel is clearly shared in an engaging manner. Can also have tracts/literature available.

## **I. Guidance for Planning a PW Service**

*Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen ... (Ecclesiastes 5:1).* A PW service is, first and foremost, a service of worship to Almighty God. It therefore must not be undertaken lightly but with an attitude of reverence and prayerful consideration. The service provides an ideal opportunity to bring the work of PW before the wider congregation.

### **11. Planning the Service**

The PW committee should plan the service, deciding who to approach as the speaker, after consultation with the minister. The minister should also be consulted regarding the order of service. When planning the service be aware of time constraints - adding in too many 'extras' can result in a rushed service, with not enough time for the speaker to bring the message.

### **12. Leading in Worship**

**Opening the Service.** The minister may invite members of PW to lead the service. It usually begins with words of welcome: "We would give you a very warm welcome to this our annual PW service. A special welcome to our speaker (can give a little background information at this point). We thank him/her for coming and look forward to the message later in the service." (Please feel free to adapt or expand this). The following Bible verses are suitable for the start of a church service:-

*Psalm 66:16-20    Luke 1:68                  Psalm 66:1-2                  Psalm 96:1-4*  
*Isaiah 41:10        Psalm 139:1-4        Jeremiah 29:11        Psalm 145:1-3*

**Opening Prayer.** This sets the tone for worship. It usually includes adoration/praise, confession of sin and a request for God's presence in the service.

**Praise.** The first hymn is usually a hymn of praise to God and the others could be on the theme of service or commitment to Christ. Also consider hymns/worship songs on mission or the year's theme.

### **Prayer of Intercession**

Remember the work of PW by praying for some of the following:

- PW Groups ... Pray that God will guide and sustain PW Group Leaders. Pray for love and unity in groups. Pray that each PW Group will be concerned about the mission field on its own doorstep and become effective at reaching women for Christ.
- Deaconesses ... as they minister in churches, hospitals, the community and prison. Pray that they might be used by Christ for the advancement of His Kingdom. Pray for their perseverance in times of discouragement and that they may know God with them as they face challenging situations.
- Missionaries ... as they work overseas. It is helpful to focus on one country or aspect of missionary work. Ideally, remember those your group has a special interest in.
- Birthday Project ... pray for the current Project.
- PW Office Staff ... for the health and strength to run the office and work together effectively as a team.
- General Secretary ... as she oversees the day to day running of the organisation and works with the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Board of Mission Overseas and the Board of Social Witness.
- PW Office Bearers ... as they fulfil their responsibilities and deputation. Pray for God's guidance in preparation and their safety on the roads.
- PW Central Committee ... for God's wisdom and vision as they seek His will for all the decisions which have to be made. Pray for them as they attend Board and Committee meetings.

Can also remember:

- Issues especially relevant to women ... pray for parents of young children; carers of the elderly; crèches; mums and tots groups; teenagers; young people living away from home for the first time; prodigal sons and daughters etc.
- Needs in the local community and congregation.

### **Closing the Service**

The Doxology. Can invite the members of the congregation to unite and say it together: *And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore, Amen.*

## A. Financial Contributions

PW Groups contribute financially to the work and witness of the organisation in three ways:-

### 1. The Mission Fund for Home and Overseas

PW aims to 'highlight the need for local and global mission'. Donations to the Mission Fund are used to support:-

- (a) **Local Mission**, through:
  - giving an annual grant to the Board of Mission in Ireland towards the training and support of **deaconesses**. Deaconesses serve in congregations, the community, hospitals and the prison service.
  - giving financial support to **South Belfast Friendship House** which offers friendship in the name of Jesus to people in a needy area of South Belfast.
  - funding **PW** at a central level so that PW members can be equipped and motivated by events/publications to encourage the women in their local areas to become disciples of Christ, in keeping with the Mission Statement of the organisation.
- (b) **Global Mission**, through:
  - giving an annual grant to the Board of Mission Overseas towards the training and support of **missionaries** appointed by the Board.
- (c) **The PW Office** so that it can provide effective administration and so facilitate all of the above 'local and global' missionary endeavour.

### 2. Membership Fees

Each PW member pays an annual membership fee. A minimum amount is recommended by the PW Central Committee. This is primarily used towards the administration of the organisation.

### 3. The Birthday Project

Donations to the Birthday Project are encouraged as an expression of gratitude to God for His goodness throughout another year. Specific projects to be supported using these donations are chosen annually by the PW Central Committee.

## **B. Raising Money**

Personal giving is usually found to be the most successful means of raising money, either through gift envelopes or mission boxes. All proceeds from these must be allocated to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas. Mission boxes are available free of charge from PW Office. The offering from any PW service or fundraiser should normally be given to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas. The primary financial responsibility of each group is the important and valuable work supported by this Mission Fund. Therefore, when allocating funds the majority of any unspecified donations received by a group should also go to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas. Groups may, if they wish, raise funds for congregational objects or other projects, provided they state clearly to their members in advance the object for which the money is to be raised. The method used to raise money should always be worthy of the purpose of PW and be in accordance with paragraph 37(e) of The Code: ‘The Kirk Session shall refuse to sanction the holding of a bazaar, sale of work, or entertainment of any kind for the purpose of raising funds for religious or philanthropic objects until the promoters have undertaken that no money shall be raised by means of balloting, raffling, or lottery tickets.’

## **C. The Gift Aid Scheme**

Gift Aid permits charities to recover from the Inland Revenue basic rate income tax on donations received from donors who sign Gift Aid declarations. Members can participate in the Gift Aid scheme provided they are United Kingdom tax payers and pay an amount of tax equal to what will be recovered on all Gift Aid donations which they make. All contributions can qualify, no matter how small, and no future commitments are required. Members are encouraged to discuss participating in the Gift Aid scheme with their group Treasurer who, in turn, will liaise with the congregational Gift Aid Secretary. Members living in the Republic of Ireland can participate in Gift Aid provided they have income or capital gains charged to United Kingdom tax at least equal to the gross amount of the donation (i.e. the donation before deduction of basic rate income tax).

## **D. Sending Money to Church House**

PW Treasurers should forward all contributions to the Financial Secretary’s Office, Church House, Belfast BT1 6DW, accompanied by the remittance sheet provided by the PW Office or by a statement showing clearly how the money is to be allocated. Cheques should be made payable to “The Presbyterian Church in Ireland”. The financial year ends on 31st December

and contributions must be received at Church House before this date to be included in the current year's accounts. Contributions received after 31st December will be included in the accounts of the following year. It is helpful if PW Groups forward contributions regularly during the year rather than wait until the end of the year.

**E. PW Financial Accounts**

The PW accounts are managed by the Financial Secretary's Office in Church House. The financial year of the organisation ends on 31st December. A report and summary of accounts shall be submitted to the PW Annual Meeting each year. A report and statement of Annual Accounts shall also be submitted to the PW Central Committee, the General Assembly and, if appropriate, the relevant Boards.

**F. Bequests**

Members may wish to consider PW as a possible beneficiary of their Will. Legacies provide an extremely valuable source of income. Bequests will be allocated to the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas unless specified otherwise.

A Suggested Form of Bequest:

**Form of Bequest to *Presbyterian Women*  
to be Incorporated in Will**

“I bequeath to  
the organisation of *Presbyterian Women* in connection with the Presbyterian Church  
in Ireland of Church House, Fisherwick Place, Belfast BT1 6DW  
the sum of ..... \*  
(alternatively the whole/one-half/one-quarter/etc. of the residue of my Estate both  
real and personal and wheresoever situated) to be applied by it for the work of the  
said *Presbyterian Women* and I direct that the receipt of the Financial Secretary  
for the time being of the said Church shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors  
of the payment of the said legacy.”

\*The sum to be written in full.

Note:

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a charity, Inland Revenue Number XN 45376,  
Revenue Commissioners Number CHY 7328. Each congregation in Northern Ireland  
will have its own charity number. Bequests to a charity in Northern Ireland are  
exempt from inheritance tax and in the Republic of Ireland from Capital Acquisitions  
Tax.

The administration of PW is co-ordinated by the staff in the PW Office. This is located in Church House in Belfast. The PW Office serves as a point of contact for PW members and provides secretarial support for the organisation.

## A. Role of PW Office

- To answer enquiries, offer advice and give support to members regarding PW.
- To facilitate the work of the PW Central Committee and its subcommittees by keeping accurate minutes and records as well as giving the necessary secretarial support.
- To be involved in the management of deaconess work.
- To organise/co-ordinate deputation for PW Central Committee members and deaconesses.
- To oversee the administration of *Wider World* by managing subscriptions and responding to any queries.
- To liaise with the Financial Secretary's Office regarding financial issues.
- To contribute to the management of South Belfast Friendship House.
- To maintain the PW website and prepare promotional material.
- To co-ordinate central events and conferences.
- To produce any written material required for the Annual Meeting, the PW Forum and PW Conferences.
- To keep PW LINK and PW Group secretaries up to date with information about PW.

## B. Staffing of PW Office

- General Secretary – to assume overall responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the organisation.
- Senior Secretary.
- Receptionist/Secretary.
- Other staff to be appointed, as required.

## History

When the first Presbyterian women missionaries set sail, groups were formed to support them in congregations throughout Ireland. For three years every letter from the fledgling missionaries was passed around these groups. By 1877 it was recognised that this was too slow a method of communication. It was then that a small leaflet called *The Pink Paper* was launched giving snippets of information from the various missionary letters coming from India. In 1886, due to increased interest in the expanding work, *The Pink Paper* became a more substantial publication entitled *Woman's Work*. This title remained unchanged for over one hundred years until in 1988 *Wider World* was launched.

## Contents

Published quarterly, *Wider World* places the same emphasis on mission as the publications which preceded it. It continues to give information about those who have obeyed Christ's commission to *go into all the world*. Articles about overseas missionaries sit side by side with articles about deaconess work in Ireland. Reports and photographs from PW Groups and events are found alongside articles on issues facing Christians today. A children's page is included for younger readers. At a personal level, readers are both challenged and encouraged through the pages of *Wider World* as contributors share what it means to live out the Christian faith.

## Ethos

The message underlying the production of *Wider World* is that, *God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)*. The pages of *Wider World* give information about God's work to encourage practical, personal and prayerful support for the spreading of the gospel.

## Distribution

Every congregation should have a *Wider World* agent who promotes the magazine throughout the congregation. Subscription details are published in each issue of the magazine or can be obtained from the PW Office. Any profits made from the sale of *Wider World* are reinvested in the work of PW as it seeks to extend Christ's Kingdom.

South Belfast Friendship House was the third Friendship House to open in Belfast, with the aim of offering friendship in the name of Jesus to people living in needy areas. It had been preceded by Friendship Houses in North and East Belfast. North Belfast Friendship House was opened in 1966 and sold in 1982. East Belfast Friendship House was opened in 1971 and closed in 1999.

South Belfast Friendship House opened in 1976 in Primitive Street. After some years, the area surrounding the original House was undergoing redevelopment. This meant new premises were required and so a House was purchased in nearby Malone Place, close to Sandy Row. As the work of the House expanded, a larger building became necessary. In the late 1980's the present House in Blythe Street was purchased and was officially opened in 1991.

South Belfast Friendship House, at 1-5 Blythe Street, continues to maintain a Christian witness in the Sandy Row community. It is ideally situated on a residential street adjacent to shops, factories and other community facilities. It is a place in which fellowship and support are available. The work undertaken in the House continues to grow and develop. The After School Club, the Young Mums' Group and the Older People's Work all aim to improve the quality of life for the people in this area of South Belfast. The staff of the House also reach out into the community by offering friendship to the residents of a neighbouring Men's Hostel.

In the early days of South Belfast Friendship House, the PWA was responsible for its management and funding. In 2004 the Board of Social Witness also became involved in the management of the House.

South Belfast Friendship House is now funded and managed by PW, in partnership with the Board of Social Witness. It continues to have a crucial role in working with families in this area of South Belfast.

## A. History and Development of PW

There have been women's organisations within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for over one hundred and thirty years.

### **The Women's Missionary Association**

The earliest organisation began in 1873 under the formidable title of "*Female Association for promoting Christianity among the Women of the East*". Very soon branches or auxiliaries grew up all over the country. In response to specific needs, single lady missionaries were trained and sent to the mission field where the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was involved. The Association continued to support these ladies both financially and prayerfully.

In 1911, as a result of a proposal from the Executive Committee, a *Girls' Auxiliary of the Women's Association for Foreign Missions* (as it was now known) was set up to give support to the missionary outreach to girls in India and China.

By 1927 the work of the Association had expanded so much that it was necessary to open an office in Church House. In 1949 the General Assembly recognised the *Women's Association for Foreign Mission* as a mission of the Church and the President, Secretary and Treasurer were appointed to represent it on the Board of Missions. The name was changed in 1960 to *Women's Missionary Association*. Financially the Association trained and supported all the single lady missionaries. It also undertook to pay half the block grant to India, and to share in the grants given by the Foreign Mission to other younger churches.

### **The Women's Home Mission**

In 1904, the General Assembly, concerned for the needs of women and girls working long hours in factories and mills, made a recommendation that "an agency of fully trained women workers should be introduced into congregational work". Following this, the Assembly sanctioned the formation of *The Women's Association for Home Mission*. The *Deaconess Guild* was set up. In 1908, a Deaconess House was purchased in Botanic Avenue, Belfast and three candidates were admitted for training. The first deaconess was appointed in 1909. By 1943 the numbers of those serving as deaconesses had so increased that a meeting of the *Deaconess Guild* Committee was called to consider the situation as regards payment of salary, recruitment and spheres of service. As a result of this meeting, the *Women's Home Mission*, into which the *Deaconess Guild* merged, came into being in 1944 and was officially recognised as a mission of the Church in 1949.

The first candidate of the *Women's Home Mission* was accepted in 1944 for service at Home and sent for two years training to St Colm's College, Edinburgh. From 1946-1965, the ladies, in their grey uniform, were

known as Church Sisters. In 1965 the General Assembly decided to restore the original title of 'Deaconess'. Deaconesses have now a recognised status in the Courts of the Church and membership in a worldwide Diaconate.

### ***Presbyterian Women's Union***

In 1905 the *Presbyterian Women's Union* (PWU) was founded as "a union of women of the Church" who met for fellowship and to hear and discuss lectures on "edifying" matters. Members soon realised that there was a need to provide help for girls coming from the country to the city to work in offices, factories and as domestic servants. When Church House was first opened in 1905, two rooms had been set aside for women, in recognition of their help in the building project. In these rooms, a Bible class was held on Sunday afternoons followed by tea. During the week, evening classes were run in cooking, dressmaking, and handcrafts. At lunch times many girls used the rooms to make tea and eat their sandwiches. Later the PWU provided a link with the women of other churches in Ireland and throughout the world, especially with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

### **Amalgamation**

It became clear that the support of the *Women's Missionary Association*, the *Women's Home Mission* and the *Presbyterian Women's Union* was drawn largely from the same body of women. The WMA was the largest and the only one with a branch and Presbyterian structure, and the women within these branches tended to take part in supporting the efforts of all three organisations. Consequently when the General Assembly undertook the study of all mission agencies within the Church they advocated the merging of the three organisations into one. This resulted in the formation of the *Presbyterian Women's Association* in 1971.

### ***The Presbyterian Women's Association and Young Women's Groups***

The three organisations which had merged to form PWA all contributed to the new organisation's ethos. As PWA developed, it endeavoured to unite the women of the church in the dedication of their lives to Jesus Christ and to inspire interest in both home and overseas mission.

Over the years, prior to 1971, Young Women's Groups had been starting to meet regularly in many congregations. In 1971 they were officially recognised by the General Assembly as they became the *Young Women's Groups* of the *Presbyterian Women's Association*. In this way they retained their own identity and accepted the challenge of helping younger women play their part in the mission of the Church. In addition, specific projects at home and abroad were highlighted every year and given extra support.

The formation of the PWA in 1971 coincided with the formal recognition of the valuable role women could play in the wider church.

PWA representatives were invited to ‘sit and deliberate’ in the Courts of the Church. In addition, one female representative from each Presbytery was included in the newly constituted Home, Overseas and Social Witness Boards.

The onset of a new century seemed an ideal time to take stock and re-evaluate the role of PWA and YWG within the church. It was recognised that Ireland had changed dramatically in the three decades since PWA was formed. The thirty years of ‘the Troubles’ in Northern Ireland had given way to peace. The country had become more secular and Church attendance was no longer normal practice. Moral values were in steep decline and marriage and family life were under threat. In particular, women’s lives had altered beyond recognition. No longer primarily homemakers, many were now in full-time employment. In this new era, women no longer felt bound by tradition or a sense of loyalty to the local church.

If the PWA and YWG were to become relevant to a new generation of women, reassessment was required. While the PWA had the strength of over 14,000 members and the YWG had 1,000 members, it was recognised that, in an increasingly informal culture, change was needed. It was also recognised that while both groups had been diligent in supporting mission overseas and in Ireland, they were in danger of ignoring the needs of women in their own area.

Accordingly, the structure and practice of PWA and YWG was prayerfully put under the spotlight. Members were asked to seek God’s guidance for the future, this resulted in PWA and YWG coming together as *Presbyterian Women*.

### ***Presbyterian Women***

This organisation aims to provide an opportunity for women to have fellowship with one another and to actively seek to win women for Jesus Christ. It also aims to encourage Christian discipleship among women and foster support among them for local and global mission.

## Milestones at a Glance

	Overseas	Home	
1873	<i>Female Association for promoting Christianity among the Women of the East</i> (Commonly known as the <i>Zenana Association</i> ).		
1874	Susan Brown, first missionary of the Association, sent to India.		
1877	The <i>Pink Paper</i> launched.		
1885	The Missionary Prayer Union formed.		
1886	New and enlarged format of <i>Pink Paper</i> launched as <i>Woman's Work</i> .		
1904		Formation of the <i>Women's Association for Home Missions</i> .	
1905			<i>Presbyterian Women's Union</i> (PWU) founded.
1908		<i>Deaconess Guild</i> formed. 3 deaconess candidates admitted for training. A Deaconess House purchased in Belfast.	
1909		Miss Bessie Barkley (first deaconess) appointed.	
1911	<i>Girls' Auxiliary</i> set up by the <i>Women's Association for Foreign Missions</i> .		
1927	WAFM Office in Church House and first General Secretary appointed.		
1944		<i>Deaconess Guild</i> merged into the newly formed <i>Women's Home Mission</i> (WHM). Deaconesses (now known as Church Sisters) began training at St. Colm's College.	
1949	WAFM officially recognised by General Assembly.	WHM officially recognized by General Assembly.	
1960	WAFM renamed <i>Women's Missionary Association</i> (WMA).		
1965		Church Sisters renamed Deaconesses.	
1969			Young Women's Groups Central Committee formed.
1971	Young Women's Groups officially recognised by the General Assembly. WMA, WHM, and PWC united to form <i>Presbyterian Women's Association</i> (PWA). YWG integrated into the PWA while maintaining their own identity. PWA representatives invited to sit and deliberate in the Church Courts.		
1974	Married women (Woman Workers) accepted at Union Theological College for part-time training in pastoral work.		
1975	<i>Girls' Auxiliary</i> disbanded.		
1988	<i>Woman's Work</i> became <i>Wider World</i> .		
1992	The two departments of PWA (Overseas and Home) amalgamated.		
2000	PWA, in partnership with the Overseas Board, became involved in the financial support of all missionary personnel. Deaconesses now trained at Union Theological College.		
2005	New financial partnership with Board of Mission in Ireland for support of deaconesses.		
2008	PWA and YWG combined to form <i>Presbyterian Women</i> .		

## B. History of the Birthday Project

As a result of a suggestion which appeared in the *Woman's Work* magazine, a Birthday Thank Offering Fund was established in 1909 to raise all or part of a missionary's salary. From 1913 those contributing undertook to give at least one shilling as a thank offering every birthday and to pray especially that day for the 'Birthday Missionary' and her work. Rosa Hudson was appointed as a 'Birthday Missionary' to China from 1913 to 1936. In 1937 the Birthday Thank Offering began to fund a special project instead of a missionary. A new hospital in Hsinking in China was chosen to receive support in that particular year. In recent years the Birthday Thank Offering has been used to support various Home and Overseas projects. As it reaches its own hundredth birthday, it continues to provide a way for women to thank God for His goodness to them by giving to a worthy cause.

## C. History of Mission Overseas

The desire to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the women and girls of India was the prime motivation for the formation of the first women's organisation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 1873. This came about thirty-three years after Rev James Glasgow and Rev Alexander Kerr and their wives began the overseas work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in Sarurashtra (North East India).

The two ministers soon learned that social customs made it impossible for them to preach to Indian women. Dr Fleming Stevenson, Joint Convener of the then Foreign Mission, became convinced that a special organisation devoted to women and girls was necessary. Eventually, in response to the pleas of Dr Stevenson and two veteran missionaries from the Free Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian women in Ireland formed the "*Female Association for promoting Christianity among the Women of the East*", in connection with the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This Association began to support teaching in private families, schools for girls, orphanages and medical work. The first missionary of the Association left for India in 1874 and began to develop the work done by the wives of the missionaries.

Between 1874 and 2000 the PWA and its preceding organisations sent a total of two hundred and thirty-nine full-time missionaries into eleven countries. Throughout these years the aim of the missionaries remained the same - to make Christ known in all the world through their life and witness. In this they were faithfully supported through prayer and finance by the

women's associations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. PW continues this support in partnership with the Board of Mission Overseas.

Those wanting more information about Irish Presbyterian Women in Mission can contact the PW Office where the following two books are available for reference purposes:-

*Into All the World: A History of the Overseas Work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1840/1990*, edited by Jack Thompson.

*The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland: 1840/1990. A Celebration of the Presbyterian Witness during 150 Years*, edited by RFG Holmes and R Buick Knox.

### Missionaries Fully Supported by the Women's Organisations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Country	Total number of missionaries who served from 1874 to 2000	First missionary to serve	Year in which missionary service began
India	116	Susan Brown	1874
China	47	Sandra Nicholson	1889
Malaya and Singapore	1	Hester Stewart <i>(formerly of China)</i>	1949
Jamaica	10	Dorothy Crawford <i>(formerly of China)</i>	1953
Malawi	39	Leonora McBriar	1960
Asians in Britain	12	Hazel McClenaghan	1971
Nepal	10	Marleen Evans	1982
Brazil	1	Mabel Coulson	1990
Hungary and Romania	1	Iona Walsh	1993
Israel	1	Fiona Smyth	1997
Kenya	1	Naomi Martin	1998

#### D. History of Mission at Home

In 1908 a Deaconess House was purchased in Belfast and three deaconess candidates were accepted for training. The first deaconess, Miss Bessie Barkley, was appointed in 1909. From the mid-1940s until 2000 deaconesses were trained in St. Colm's College in Edinburgh. In 2000, Union Theological College Belfast became the principal training college for deaconesses.

Over the years, the role of the deaconess has developed in response to the need for evangelism and pastoral care in a changing society. Deaconesses have offered practical Christian love and friendship to many in the community through a number of Centres and Houses in Belfast. There was a Home Advice Centre which helped women and girls with domestic, matrimonial and personal problems. For some years a deaconess also worked in the Vine Community and Advice Centre on the Crumlin Road. Hope House in the lower Shankill Estate and South, North and East Belfast Friendship Houses were other places in which deaconesses exercised community-based ministries. For a few years a deaconess led a multi-media workshop. This innovative ministry aimed to encourage congregations and individuals to develop the use of drama in evangelism. The first time a deaconess was appointed to serve as part of a hospital chaplaincy team was in 1973. Since then hospital deaconesses have served in hospitals in Belfast, Dublin, Antrim and Craigavon. In 2007 a deaconess was appointed to temporary Chaplaincy work in Maghaberry Prison – yet another ‘first’ in the history of deaconess work within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The year 2007 also saw the re-appointment of a deaconess to South Belfast Friendship House in the Sandy Row area of Belfast. Although deaconesses have had, and continue to have, many different roles, their main sphere of service has been within Presbyterian congregations. This remains unchanged. Serving alongside ministers and as part of ministry teams they continue to assist in the work and witness of the Church.

For almost one hundred years the PWA had sole responsibility for deaconess training and the management of deaconess work. This only changed in 2006 when the PWA entered into a partnership with the Board of Mission in Ireland. PW has now replaced PWA in this partnership.

## A. Amalgamation at Central Level

From May 2008 the PWA Executive Committee and the YWG Central Committee will be replaced by the PW Central Committee. Five members of the former YWG Central Committee shall be voting members of the PW Central Committee for an interim period of two years. These five members are automatically entitled to become members of their local PW LINK Planning Committees. One member of the former YWG Central Committee shall also join the Office Bearers of PW Central Committee for a two year period. These provisions will be reviewed at the end of the two year transitional period.

## B. Amalgamation at Congregational Level

*How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity (Psalm 133:1).*

Successful amalgamation will require grace and goodwill from the membership of both existing groups. It will also require resolve and effort. However, this investment of time and energy has the potential of leading to the formation of a stronger, more effective group with the following advantages:-

- i. A united witness. *By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35).*
- ii. A united purpose. Clearly defined in the Mission Statement and Aims of PW.
- iii. Brings together the talents and gifts of a wider cross-section of women enabling new things to be attempted for the Lord.
- iv. Allows women of all ages to learn from each other in groups in which enthusiasm and energy are combined with experience. It will also help prevent polarisation based on age.

Amalgamation will be prone to the teething problems common to all new ventures. It is vital that there is good communication between the existing PWA branch and Young Women's Group prior to the amalgamation. It is also vital that these channels of communication remain open after the new group is formed so that concerns can be addressed as they arise. It may be beneficial to involve a third party from outside the amalgamating groups to act as a mediator between them before and during the amalgamation process.

The PW Office may be contacted for practical advice in this regard. Amalgamation presents an opportunity for a fresh, reinvigorated re-launch of women's work in a congregation. It is also an ideal time to make a special effort to invite new members and welcome them into the newly formed group.

The following practical guidelines for amalgamation are commended for use.

### **B1. Electing a PW Committee**

In the special circumstance of amalgamation, members from both existing groups must be elected by their respective organisations onto a new PW committee which shall serve for two years. This should take place at the final meeting of the PWA or YWG. The recommended number of committee members is given below –

Number of members in existing branch or group	Number of members to be elected onto the new PW committee
0-10	2
11-20	3-4
21-30	4-5
31-40	6-7
41-60	7-8
61-100	9-11

This should result in both groups being represented in a proportional manner on the new committee.

*Example 1:* If a PWA with 30 members combines with a YWG which has 40 members the new committee should be made up in the ratio of 3 PWA representatives for every 4 YWG representatives.

*Example 2:* If a PWA with 80 members combines with a YWG which has 20 members, the new committee should be made up in the ratio of 8 PWA representatives for every 2 YWG representatives.

It is recognised that the figures suggested above may result in a larger committee than recommended in the PW Group section of this Guidebook. This is to allow adequate representation from both PWA and YWG. This larger committee will serve for the first two years of the amalgamated group. After this period of time a committee should be elected from the PW Group membership, in accordance with the guidance in the PW Group section of this Guidebook.

### **B2. Electing Office Bearers**

If the original members of both the PWA branch and the Young Women's Group are to have ownership of PW, sensitivity is required. Members from both must be elected by the new committee as Office Bearers. Generosity of spirit is commended so that the smaller group in the amalgamation is conscious that they are a vital/integral part of the newly formed PW Group. To ensure both PWA and YWG have adequate input into the leadership of PW, one or more of the following options must be adopted for the first two years of the amalgamated group:-

- Option 1:* Appoint a Joint Leadership - have one woman from PWA and one woman from YWG acting as joint leaders
- Option 2:* Appoint a Leader and Deputy Leader – with one from PWA and one from YWG
- Option 3:* Appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer – with one from PWA and one from YWG
- Option 4:* Appoint a Secretary and an Assistant Secretary – with one from PWA and one from YWG  
and  
Appoint a Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer – with one from PWA and one from YWG

### **B3. Committee Meetings**

In addition to the duties given in the PW Group section of this Guidebook, the committee leading an amalgamated group must decide how the new group should be organised. To this end it should meet soon after its election. All decisions taken at this meeting should be formally recorded for future reference. These must then be adhered to unless amended at a later date by the entire committee.

### **B4. Opening PW Meetings in an Amalgamated Group**

It is much more likely for members of both PWA and YWG to feel 'at home' in their new PW Group if familiar faces appear at the front. It is therefore recommended that the opening of meetings should be shared between the former PWA and YWG members now serving on the newly constituted committee. This should be done in a proportional manner.

*Example 1:* If a PWA with 30 members combines with a YWG with 30 members, half the meetings should be opened by a former PWA member and half by a former YWG member.

*Example 2:* If a PWA with 20 members combines with a YWG with 40 members, twice as many meetings should be opened by a former YWG member than a former PWA member.

### **B5. Procedure to be Followed After Two Year Interim Period**

Assuming the PW Group is now established in its own right, it is time to follow the guidelines in the PW Group section of this Guidebook, whilst remaining conscious of the needs highlighted above.

All offices can be contacted at:

Church House, Fisherwick Place, Belfast, BT1 6DW  
Tel: (028) 9032 2284

Web Pages:

Presbyterian Church in Ireland	<a href="http://www.presbyterianireland.org">www.presbyterianireland.org</a>
<i>Presbyterian Women</i>	<a href="http://www.presbyterianireland.org/pw">www.presbyterianireland.org/pw</a>
Board of Mission in Ireland	<a href="http://www.missionireland.org">www.missionireland.org</a>
Board of Mission Overseas	<a href="http://www.presbyterianireland.org/overseas">www.presbyterianireland.org/overseas</a>
Board of Social Witness	<a href="http://www.presbyterianireland.org/bsw">www.presbyterianireland.org/bsw</a>
Prayerline	<a href="http://www.presbyterianireland.org/overseas/prayerline">www.presbyterianireland.org/overseas/prayerline</a>
	Telephone: (028) 9041 7308
Prayer Focus	Register on BMI website

Email Addresses:

<i>Presbyterian Women</i>	<a href="mailto:pw@presbyterianireland.org">pw@presbyterianireland.org</a>
PW General Secretary	<a href="mailto:chawthorne@presbyterianireland.org">chawthorne@presbyterianireland.org</a>
Board of Mission in Ireland	<a href="mailto:bmi@presbyterianireland.org">bmi@presbyterianireland.org</a>
Board of Mission Overseas	<a href="mailto:overseas@presbyterianireland.org">overseas@presbyterianireland.org</a>
Board of Social Witness	<a href="mailto:bsw@presbyterianireland.org">bsw@presbyterianireland.org</a>
Wider World	<a href="mailto:widerworld@presbyterianireland.org">widerworld@presbyterianireland.org</a>